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MARY BARNARD HORNE

THE
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A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

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THE OTHER FELLOW

The Other Fellow

A Comedy in Three Acts

By
MARY BARNARD HORNE

"A woman in all times hath been observed to be an animal hard to understand and much inclined to mischief."

—*Le Dèpit Amoureux.*

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The Other Fellow



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The Other Fellow

CHARACTERS

(As originally produced in the Town Hall, Belmont, Mass.,
February, 22, 1895, by the Kendall Weston Stock Co.)

RICHARD AYLWARD, *Lord Deyncourt*, Kendall Weston.

GERALD HARTLEY, - - - Gardner Crane.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD, { *in the Scots*
 Guards, } Willard Earle.

WILLIAM MIXTER, { *millionaire Ameri-*
 can yachtsman, } Eugene Caton.

STILES, *an old servant of the Aylwards*, Homer Eaton.

MILLS, *a young footman*, - - Jack Swords Trull.

LADY JANE AYLWARD, *sister to Richard*, Edith Hardy.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE, *cousin to Richard*, Cora Cowan.

MRS. HARTLEY, *aunt to Gerald*, - Lillian Clark.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN, - Grace Mae Lamkin.

Ladies and gentlemen, as guests for the ball in Act. II,
ad libitum.

Time,—the present.

ACT I.—Deyncourt Terrace, London. The White
Room. The Conspiracy.

ACT II.—The same. Three weeks later. Check-
mated.

ACT III.—The Towers, Berkshire. One year later.
Which wins?

PROPERTIES

Two table-cloths, four yellow coffee cups and saucers. Tray of cigarettes, silver candle-stick and candle. Lumps of sugar in dish with tongs. Four small napkins. Bowl of flowers. Three plates, three knives and forks. Three cups and saucers. Napkins, glass inkstand, pen and writing materials. Platter. Salad in bowl. Rolls on plate. Paper for Deyncourt. Coffee-pot and coffee. Large napkin. Three telegrams and two letters. Roses, flowers, garden scissors. Large and small tray.

COSTUMES

All the men, save the servants, wear frock-coats in the first and third acts and evening clothes in the second act. The ladies dress in the first act as described on their entrances. In the second, they appear in ball dresses, and in the third in tea-gowns suitable for a hot summer afternoon in the country.

THE OTHER FELLOW

ACT ONE

THE CONSPIRACY

SCENE.—*The White Room at Deyncourt Terrace, London, the home of the AYLWARDS. An octagonal apartment handsomely furnished. A door at L. gives entrance to the dining-room, another, diagonally across L. U. E., opens into a ball-room, and a third at R. U. E. into a conservatory. There is another door at R., giving access to a reception-room. At R. and L. of the stage are tables with chairs. At C., back, there is a mantelpiece. Other appropriate furniture, draperies, etc., ad libitum.*

As the curtain rises, STILES enters from L. with a tablecloth over his arm, followed by MILLS with tray bearing coffee-cups, cigarettes, etc. STILES is a lean old man of seventy or more, very correct in his manner as a butler save when overcome by twinges of rheumatism, which are apt to catch him in the joints at most inopportune moments. MILLS is a young footman of eighteen, who manifests the greatest respect for STILES.

STILES.

[*Spreading cloth on table R.*] Ugh ! there it goes !
Ketchin' me this time on the hip.

MILLS.

Did you speak, Mr. Stiles?

STILES.

Me! No. I've been in sarvice too many years to waste my breath—ugh! there, it's took me on the other side!

MILLS.

[*Setting down tray.*] Mr. Stiles, I'm sure you're in pain.

STILES.

[*Very erect.*] I niver felt better in my life. I ——
[*Screws up his face in agony.*]

MILLS.

Why don't you sit down? There ain't nobody comin' in here for a bit.

STILES.

Young man, you'll be a disgrace to the sarvice, if you—ugh! [*sits on chair*] if you begin your career by offering advice to your elders. The main thing to obsarve, if you wish to git on, the main thing, I say, is to keep your eyes open and yer mouth shut. Now lay that table and git out. [MILLS *lays table.*] I'm a leetle sorry I was so short with ye, Mills, but ——

MILLS.

Oh, that's all right.

STILES.

Keep yer mouth shut.

MILLS.

All right.

STILES.

If you want to rise to the position of a hesteemed and respected butler, you'll have to use stickin'-plaster over that horifice. [MILLS *puts hand over mouth and coughs.*] You can go. [Rises painfully.]

MILLS

[*Hastening towards him.*] Shall I——

STILES.

No! No! No! I ain't 'elpless—not yet, and you are a leetle too fresh. Remember what I've told ye, and go. If you are needed, you'll be sent for. [*Exit MILLS, L. STILES hobbling about table.*] It do be strange how them young ones wants to crowd us old ones out. There ain't nobody could step into my shoes. I've sarved Master Richard and Miss Jane ever since they was leetle critters, beggin' of me to save 'em bits from the dinner-parties. Lord! what mischievous mites they was. [*Laughs.*] That was long before Master Richard come into the title, and now that he's my Lord of Deyncourt, would it become me to desart him? Never, while I've a leg to—ugh! [*sits abruptly*] stand on.

[*Enter LADY JANE from conservatory. She is a handsome woman of twenty-eight, dressed in a tailor-made gown, with mannish collar, cuffs and tie.*]

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Stiles.

STILES.

[*Rising abruptly and standing erect.*] My lady.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

If you are getting so decrepit that you can't stand up, you had better make way for a younger man.

STILES.

There you go, Miss Jane, a-forgettin' past sarvices.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Stiles, it seems to me that you are the one that forgets. Are they at luncheon?

STILES.

Yes, my lady.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

How many?

STILES.

Four on 'em.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

H'm [*looks at watch*], I will lunch here.

STILES.

But, Lady Jane —

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Silence. I will lunch here. See to it directly.

[*Exit R.*]

STILES.

Oh, Lord! and coffee and cigars ordered for the gentlemen in this here room at once. Well, well, we ain't no match for the women in this house [*laughs*],

an' the worst of it is, Lord Deyncourt thinks nobody can't tell him nothink about 'em.

[*Exit L., to dining-room. Enter MRS. HARTLEY, R., ushered in by MILLS. She is a plump little widow of forty, very pretty and talkative and a little over-dressed, using a lorgnette because she is near-sighted, and a fan because she is easily overheated.*]

MILLS.

Lady Jane was here a moment ago; I will speak to her.

MRS. HARTLEY.

[*Using lorgnette and seeing coffee.*] Haven't you made a mistake? This must be the wrong room.

MILLS.

Ho, no! There ain't no wrong rooms in this house. Lady Jane occupies 'em all in turn. She give me hexplicit orders to show her callers in here to-day. [*Exit L.*]

MRS. HARTLEY.

Dear, dear me. Jane goes a little too far. If Richard Aylward wasn't the most good-natured man in the world, he simply would not stand it. I believe on the whole he rather likes it. Gives him a chance to pose before the world as a man that nothing can annoy, and — [Enter LADY JANE R.] Oh, here you are.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Ah, Mrs. Hartley? Glad to see you. [*Greetings.*]

MRS. HARTLEY.

Jane, I have come here in great haste to tell you a bit of news and to ask your assistance. I did not wait for luncheon even.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Indeed? You will take luncheon with me, then?

MRS. HARTLEY.

What, here?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Yes, here. Why not?

MRS. HARTLEY.

Look there. *[Indicating table R.]*

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Do coffee and cigars on the right prevent luncheon on the left?

MRS. HARTLEY.

But gentlemen —

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

But ladies —

MRS. HARTLEY.

Oh, Jane, you are incorrigible. Still, it's your own affair. I can stand it if you can.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Very well. Tell me your news, and then come to my room.

MRS. HARTLEY.

[Taking chair L.; JANE sits beside her.] Of course you know that Helen Castledown has thrown Gerald over.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Oh, yes, that is the talk of the town. Good news, too, for Gerald. Poor match every way.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Yes, I suppose it was. He is too serious for her, and she—well, every one knows what she is.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Hold on, there, Mrs. Hartley, I rather like her, you know.

MRS. HARTLEY.

I'm not surprised. It is her independence that pleases you. Lady Castledown certainly does as she likes—with most of us.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Excepting Richard.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Hm! Has she ever tackled Richard?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Heaven forbid!

MRS. HARTLEY.

Well, why don't you ask me for my news?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

I thought you had told it.

MRS. HARTLEY.

[*Using fan.*] Bless your heart! Am I a woman that would go without my luncheon and brave such heat as this to tell you a bit of news that has been hawked about all the clubs and drawing-rooms in

London for three whole weeks? No, my dear. My news is absolutely fresh.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Let's have it, then, without delay.

MRS. HARTLEY.

You knew, of course, that my brother, Sir Edward Hammond, was dead.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

[*Taking out her handkerchief.*] Yes, certainly, I knew that.

MRS. HARTLEY.

There, there, put up your handkerchief. We won't have any semblance of grief. Poor Edward was the most trying creature imaginable. One never knew what atrocity he would commit next. This beats everything that's gone before.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

I suppose he couldn't help it.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Help it? Of course he could help it.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Did he kill himself?

MRS. HARTLEY.

Jane Aylward, what are you talking about? Edward commit suicide? He was too fond of living and bothering other people to do that.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Well, then, how could he help dying?

MRS. HARTLEY.

I never said he could, but he needn't have left all his money to his wife's niece, Marjory Heathcote, and cut Gerald Hartley off with a beggarly allowance that wouldn't keep a mouse alive.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Has he done that?

MRS. HARTLEY.

He has done that, after adopting Gerald and bringing him up as his son and heir.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

That's a stiffish dose for Gerald, just now, too, when he is down on his luck, matrimonially. Did Helen Castledown know this—when she ——

MRS. HARTLEY.

Jilted him? I think not. At any rate, we'll give her the benefit of the doubt.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

By the way, Marjory Heathcote comes here to-day.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Marjory Heathcote—here? How is that?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

She is a connection of ours on her mother's side. Her mother died young and left her a mere baby. She came with her nurse and lived with us until her father married again. On her father's death, two years ago, Richard was appointed one of her guardians. She has been living with the other guardian, an uncle, a poor curate, down in Berkshire.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Nice girl?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

I dare say, as girls go. Haven't seen her myself for years. Pretty child, but allowed to vegetate, as she had no prospects.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Poor Edward has changed all that.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

She wrote that she wished to come to London to consult Richard on business.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Depend upon it, Jane, the business is in connection with this legacy, and Richard knows all about it.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Very likely.

MRS. HARTLEY.

And hasn't told you? How exasperating.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Mrs. Hartley, living with Richard is an education.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Well, how you two get on surpasses me. I should simply die of exasperation if he was my brother; but there, that is your affair. To return to our muttons—lambs, I should say.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Gerald and Marjory?

MRS. HARTLEY.

Yes. Now, listen, Jane. I can see only one way out of this difficulty. Gerald must marry the girl, and you and I must arrange it.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

It strikes me, Mrs. Hartley, that you are jumping at conclusions.

MRS. HARTLEY.

I always jump. Never should arrive at any if I didn't.

[*Enter STILES with luncheon service for three ; arranges it on table L.*]

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Luncheon will be ready directly. Come with me. [*Crosses to R.*] Stiles, I am expecting a visitor shortly—a young lady. Send her to me if she comes before we return.

[*Exeunt LADY JANE and MRS. HARTLEY, R.*]

STILES.

[*Laying table.*] If this don't beat the Dutch ! Well, well, times 'ave changed since I was young.

MILLS.

[*At door, C.*] This way, miss, the ladies is in here. [*Retires.*]

[*Enter MARJORY timidly. She is an extremely attractive girl of nineteen, with rather a childish manner, big, innocent blue eyes, and a tendency to pout. She is dressed in as picturesque a costume as is compatible with her having*]

traveled from the country on a hot summer's day.]

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Aside.*] No one here, and they knew I was coming. [*To STILES, who is busy at table, L.*] Oh, Mr. Stiles, don't you know me?

STILES.

[*Bowing.*] Beggin' yer pardon—ugh! Can't say as I do.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Going up to him, pulling his coat and speaking like a child.*] Dear Mr. Stiles, have you got a pain?

STILES.

Lord bless my soul! if it hain't little Miss Marjory growed up! I'm glad to see yer, miss, indeed I am, if I may be permitted to say so.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Of course you can say so. Haven't I sat on your knee many a time in the housekeeper's room?

STILES.

I—ahem—I wouldn't speak o' that afore Lady Jane, if I was you.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

But I was such a mite then.

STILES.

[*Chuckling.*] Half-past four. That's what you told cook.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*With dignity.*] But I'm a young lady now, and I am to be presented—and—where are they all?

STILES.

The gentlemen are at luncheon, and Lady Jane, she just left horders that the new arrival, that must be you, miss, was to be showed to her room directly she arrived, and your maid ——

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Oh, I haven't any maid. My uncle brought me to the door, and left a message for Cousin Richard.

STILES.

Hm! Lord Deyncourt.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Yes, Lord Deyncourt, my Cousin Richard.

STILES.

Shall I show you to your room now?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Wait a moment, Mr. Stiles.

STILES.

I wouldn't say mister, if I was you, now that you are growed up.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

But you are so old, you know ——

STILES.

[*Very erect.*] H'm. There are older men, Miss Marjory.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Are there, really ! I never saw any.

STILES.

[*Stiffly.*] This way, miss.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Oh, please, Stiles, don't get angry. You seem just as young as you did when I was a baby.

STILES.

[*Mollified.*] Thank you, miss.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Aside.*] He was as old as Methuselah then. [*To STILES.*] I want you to tell me something. I wouldn't ask, but I do so wish to know. Is Mr. Gerald Hartley lunching here to-day?

STILES.

Yes, miss, he's here. He's pretty generally found along with Lord Richard. [*Laughter heard in dining-room, L.*] Hark ! that's him a-laughing.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Laughing ? Stiles, are you sure that he is laughing ? How can he ?

STILES.

Lord, Miss Marjory. A man must be down on his luck indeed, when he can't laugh at one of our luncheons.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*To herself.*] I am glad he isn't completely crushed.

STILES.

Perhaps, miss, he didn't care such a deal for the lady.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

The lady? What lady?

STILES.

Why, the lady as jilted him—Lady Castledown.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Lady Castledown jilted Gerald Hartley? When?

STILES.

That isn't for the likes of me to know, miss. But it's not so long since.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Aside.*] What sort of a man is he? Jilted and disinherited, and still able to laugh. [*Pause.*] Stiles, you and I used to be awfully good friends, didn't we?

STILES.

We was, miss, we was.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

And you used to—to—let me do things, didn't you?

STILES.

If my memory don't fail me, miss, you was gin-erally a-doin' of something.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Edging towards entrance to dining-room, L.*] Do you remember, when I was very, very small, how you used to let me peep at the dinner parties?

STILES.

Lord, yes, Miss Marjory. You was a terrible child to tease in them days, and Mr. Richard he spoiled you a bit, beggin' yer ladyship's pardon.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Drawing curtain L.*] And you used to draw the curtain so.

STILES.

No, miss, I drawed it this way, an' you put yer little head under my arm so, and——

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

We peeped.

STILES.

Just so, miss.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

And I saw Cousin Richard.

STILES.

Yes, yes.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

And he always had his best friend on his right. Who is the gentleman on his right to-day?

STILES.

[*Drawing curtain.*] Miss Marjory, you ain't a baby no longer, an' this ain't becomin' a young lady in your position.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Very erect.*] Stiles, answer my question. I command you.

STILES.

[*Chuckling.*] If you was to stamp your little foot now, Lord, how you'd take me back.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Stiles.

STILES.

[*Sober.*] I beg yer pardon, miss. The gentleman is Mr. Gerald Hartley.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*With dignity.*] Thank you, Stiles. You may show me to my room. [Bell rings.]

STILES.

[*Hobbling to door* R. U. E.] I'm wanted, miss. I'll send Mills directly.

[*Exit* STILES R. U. E. *Enter* GERALD HARTLEY
L. *He is a fine looking, clean shaven man of about thirty, with a serious manner. A member of Parliament, with still further political ambitions.*]

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Aside.*] How he must hate me.

GERALD HARTLEY.

I beg pardon.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Turning and discovering* GERALD.] I said, "How he must hate me," and I meant you.

[*Looking intently at* GERALD.]

GERALD HARTLEY.

I hate you? I do not understand.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Of course you don't. How could you?

GERALD HARTLEY.

It seems to me, begging your pardon, that you are talking nonsense.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Oh, you won't think so when I tell you who I am.

GERALD HARTLEY.

I hardly see how that knowledge can convert nonsense into sense.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

You are Mr. Gerald Hartley, are you not?

GERALD HARTLEY.

As you have never seen me before, I don't know how you have arrived at that conclusion, but I am Gerald Hartley, at your service.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

And I—am—Marjory Heathcote.

GERALD HARTLEY.

I suspected as much.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

How coolly you take it. I should think you would simply want to—to—murder me.

GERALD HARTLEY.

On the contrary, I think I shall rather like you. Of course I feel a little sore about being disinherited. It interferes with my prospects, and——

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Oh, but it doesn't at all. I've come to London to give up everything.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Now, you are talking nonsense, pure and simple.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Indeed, I am not. You are Sir Edward's proper successor, and I don't want to be an heiress. I give the estate to you, and we shall be comfortable all round.

GERALD HARTLEY.

This is absurd. An estate isn't a toy that you can give away because you don't fancy it.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Fancy it? I positively hate it.

GERALD HARTLEY.

It is unfortunate, as you will have to make the best of it.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

There is no best to it. You simply must accept this legacy. Otherwise we shall be placed in a most painful situation.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Miss Heathcote, you alarm me.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Do you come here often?

GERALD HARTLEY.

Pretty well. Deyncourt Terrace is one of my haunts.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Then the sooner this business is settled the better.

GERALD HARTLEY.

I do not understand.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

That is because you are a man, and men are so dense. Don't you know what every one says already?

GERALD HARTLEY.

What every one says? About what?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Why, you and me.

GERALD HARTLEY.

About you and me? I should hardly think that people would trouble themselves about us collectively.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Oh, but they do. And you ought to—to—have sense enough to—to help me.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Really, Miss Heathcote, you alarm me. If you will state the case a little more clearly, I will see what I can do. What does every one say?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Well, if we have got to meet often, you may as well know the worst at once. I—I can't imagine anything more dreadful. They say—every one says, when they

hear about Sir Edward's will, that—that you and I will have to marry.

GERALD HARTLEY.

The deuce they do.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

You needn't swear about it. It is bad enough without that.

GERALD HARTLEY.

I beg your pardon, I was taken by surprise. People have no right to—to say such things. As a man of honor, you see, it would be out of the question as far as I am concerned.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

And I—I wouldn't marry you if there wasn't another man in the world.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Hm ! Thank you.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

So now we can be friends, and we will get Cousin Richard to settle everything.

GERALD HARTLEY.

We can be friends, as you say, but I fail to see how anything is to be settled between us. The property is yours.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

I was afraid you would be disagreeable.

[*Enter* MILLS, R.]

MILLS.

This way, miss, my lady's woman is waiting.

GERALD HARTLEY.

I hope, later, to be properly introduced. Until then —

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

You are far worse than I expected.

[*Exit, followed by MILLS, R.*]

GERALD HARTLEY.

[*Meditating.*] Jilted by one woman, and told by a chit of nineteen that she wouldn't marry me if I was the only man on earth. Dick Aylward need lose no sleep over my matrimonial prospects. By the way, I wonder where the servants are? I shall have to fetch the pen and ink myself.

[*Exit R. Enter MIXTER and CHATFIELD from dining-room, L. MIXTER is a short, stout, clean-shaven, commonplace man of thirty-eight or forty, without polish, but dressed much more smartly than the other men. CHATFIELD is a handsome young fellow of twenty-six, with close-cropped, curly hair, which grows low on his forehead, a small moustache, large sleepy eyes, which he uses to great advantage, a lazy manner, but with a military bearing which indicates his profession.*]

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Wonder where Hartley is? He's been a deuce of a while getting that ink.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Don't see him anywhere. I say, for a man that's down on his luck, he takes it easy.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

What, being jilted? S'pose he don't really care. Helen Castledown's a bad lot, anyway.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

How, bad? What do you mean?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Don't pull in harness. Likes her head. Apt to bolt.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Oh, I see. Handsome?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Never seen her? Well, old fellow, you've something to live for. Handsome? She's a beauty down to the ground. Not a blemish. Couldn't mate her in London. Doubt if you could on the two continents.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

And our friend Hartley lets her throw him over without a groan. [*Crosses to R. of table R.*]

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Well, you see they didn't hit it off together, and I s'pose 'twas mutual.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

H'm. I should like to meet the handsomest woman in London. [*Sits R. of table.*] S'pose, Chatfield, that I could get an introduction?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Can't say. You see it would be out of the question to ask Hartley, and Lord Deyncourt is a bit stiffish. Don't like her myself, but still ——

WILLIAM MIXTER.

I say, Chatfield, what are you driving at?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Well, notwithstanding her faults, she is Lady Castledown, you know, and you ——

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Anything the matter with me?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Well, you must admit yourself that you are only a plain American citizen. [*Sits L. of table R.*]

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Oh, I see.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

No offense intended.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

None taken. Oh, no. I understand, then, that you and your friends refuse to present a plain American citizen to the handsomest woman in London with no reputation to speak of ——

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Sir !

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Beg pardon, I took your word for it,—because she happens to belong to the British aristocracy.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Oh, come, don't go off like that. If you want an introduction, I dare say I can manage it.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Ain't you one of them—the aristocracy, I mean?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Oh, well, younger sons don't count. We can do pretty much as we like. [*Enter GERALD with writing materials and places them on table R. Stands back of table.*] I say, Hartley, what's up?

[*Enter STILES, L., with luncheon; places it on table, L.*]

GERALD HARTLEY.

Stiles, look here, what are you about?

STILES.

Lady Jane hasn't had her luncheon yet.

GERALD HARTLEY.

And she takes it here?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

The deuce she does.

STILES.

Them's her orders, sir.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Whew!

[*Enter LORD DEYN COURT, L., with paper in hand. Gentlemen rise. He is a tall, rather loosely built, extremely plain man of thirty-six, with a long moustache, and hair rather longer*]

than is usually worn, clad in a tweed traveling suit, not particularly well fitting. His movements are rather clumsy, and there is nothing to indicate that he is a person of rank. He has a pleasant voice, and speaks in slow, slightly drawling accents.]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I say, fellows, our matrimonial discussion has materialized. I've got a scheme to lay before you. Stiles, bring the coffee. [*Approaches table, L. STILES hobbles towards door, L.*] Hold on a minute, Stiles. What's this?

STILES.

My lady's orders, sir. Luncheon for three.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Here and now?

STILES.

Them's her orders, sir. I made bold to remind her ladyship, sir, that you'd also give orders——

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Get the coffee. It's all right. [*Exit STILES L.*]

[*DEYNCOURT goes to table R., sits back of table.*

CHATFIELD and MIXTER sit L. and R. respectively. GERALD crosses to table L., sits R. of it.]

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*Aside to MIXTER.*] It would take more than Lady Jane to rattle Dick Aylward.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Quite so. I agree with you.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Damn it, what do you know about it?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Took your word for it. See?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

We all agreed, just now, did we not, that marrying for love is about the most senseless thing a man can do?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Well, that depends on circumstances, doesn't it?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Oh, come, Tommy, don't hark back now. Of course marriage as an institution is a necessity, but what the deuce has love to do with it?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Well, you see, Deyncourt—it—so to speak—suggests it. You can't deny that.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I suppose, for instance, being bachelors of a suitable age, you have all been in love more or less.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Hm ! Rather more than less.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Your own experience must answer that question, Lord Deyncourt.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

You may leave me out.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Deyncourt doesn't count where the women are concerned. He is impervious to their charms.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Quite so, I agree with you.

[CHATFIELD *glares at* MIXTER.]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Gerald, you don't answer, but as we all know your recent experience —

GERALD HARTLEY.

Suppose we leave my private affairs out, also.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

But we can't, you see ; it is to save fellows like you from such experiences that I have formulated this scheme.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Oh, I say, Dick, what practical joke are you going to play on us now ?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

There is no joke about it. I tell you it is in dead earnest. You all admit that you have been in love. No doubt the object of your devotion at that time was faultless. Would you marry her now ? Answer me, Tommy ?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Well, h'm, there have been so—so many. I've been in love off and on ever since I left the nursery, and, well, of course, I couldn't marry them all, you know.

LORD DEYN COURT.

They've all angled for you, Tommy. You will admit that.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Oh, yes, you're right there, and caught me most of them, too. But then, you see, they chucked me back into the water as soon as they tired of me.

LORD DEYN COURT.

For which you should be devoutly thankful.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Well, that depends, you know, on who does the chucking.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

That's so.

GERALD HARTLEY.

I say, Dick, what are you driving at?

LORD DEYN COURT.

Tommy has just demonstrated in a fishy manner that we are all at the mercy of women, and I have tried to show you that love makes an idiot of a man. Now if, when a man is in his right mind, presumably not in love, he would give his friends the necessary authority over him to control him when he is out of his right mind, presumably in love, marriage would not be such a failure as it seems at the present time.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*Puzzled.*] Mind saying that over again, Deyncourt? I don't quite twig it.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Quite so, Captain Chatfield. I don't catch on, either.

GERALD HARTLEY.

It's fortunate, Dick, that you were not destined for the bar. Your reasoning is exceedingly obtuse. Perhaps you can explain yourself.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Of course. It is all clear to me, but I may have to appeal to your legal mind, Hartley, to make my deductions appear logical. Don't you see that when a man is in love, his first impulse is to rush off and propose marriage. The lady may be a most unsuitable person, but he doesn't realize that in his demented condition. Now, if his friends had control of him, they would naturally keep him in check until he cooled off, so to speak, and then the chances are that he would never propose at all.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Oh, that's your little game.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Our remaining bachelors up to the present time seems to prove us capable of managing our own affairs.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Luck and chance, Gerald; nothing else. You've just escaped a most unsuitable marriage by an uncommonly narrow shave. You might not get off so easy a second time.

GERALD HARTLEY.

There will be no second time.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I'll be hanged if I can see what all this amounts to.

[*Enter STILES with coffee, which he serves during conversation.*]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

It amounts to just this. We bachelors must make a stand against the women, and every great movement must be started by somebody. I propose to start, here and now, a society for the Protection of Bachelors. Gerald, will you write out this agreement which I have drawn up? Then we will all sign.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I doubt if signing any document would help me where the women are concerned. I'd come a cropper every time, if she were pretty and wanted to throw me.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

This will save you.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Look here, Deyncourt, aren't you carrying this a little too far?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Not a bit of it.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I say. You'll put us up to the ropes before you ask us to sign?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Quite so. I'm a little cautious about my signature.

We Americans don't put our names to every paper that is placed before us.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Come, Dick, let's have your scheme. Read it out.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Of course we pledge ourselves to secrecy. Stiles, you are no longer needed. [*Exit STILES, L.*] This is the agreement which each of us will sign.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Oh, so you are going to sign, also?

LORD DEYN COURT.

Oh, yes, as a mere form. This is the idea. [*Reads.*] "I promise, upon my honor as a gentleman, that if from this time forth I should at any time form the intention of asking a lady to become my wife, I will at once call a meeting of this society to consider my intention and to make such inquiries as may be deemed necessary. I also promise, upon my honor as a gentleman, that if a majority of this society decides against the lady in question, I will, for the space of one year, hold no communication with her whatever, verbal or written, direct or indirect."

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

That finishes me. I've always had hopes of an elderly heiress in the end. But, great Scott! no woman, however old and passé, would stand absolute desertion for a whole year.

LORD DEYN COURT.

But, my dear fellow, you don't understand. The

elderly heiress is most suitable in your case, and we should doubtless all decide in her favor.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*With a groan.*] No doubt of that.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Come, Gerald, write this out in proper form.
[*Looking at watch.*] I leave for the Continent in less than an hour, and we must use despatch.

[GERALD writes. STILES and MILLS enter L. with luncheon. MILLS holds tray while STILES places luncheon on table L. STILES goes up to conservatory. MILLS takes tray out and returns with napkin over arm; waits at table L.]

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I say, we ought to have a president.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

I propose Lord Deyncourt.

GERALD HARTLEY.

I second the motion. [Continues to write.]

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Contrary minded? 'Tis a vote:

[Shake hands with DEYN COURT. Resume seats after business of shaking hands.]

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Do I understand that if, in point of fact, if any of us—ahem!

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Gets bowled over.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Quite so, bowled over is good ; then if any of us gets bowled over, that person is to communicate the fact to the president of this society, and he will call a meeting at once, to—in short—to pass judgment on the lady ?

LORD DEYN COURT.

You have grasped the situation, Mixter.

[*Enter ladies from conservatory, MRS. HARTLEY, MARJORY and LADY JANE. STILES, at conservatory door ushers them in.*]

STILES.

[*Bowing as ladies enter.*] Luncheon is served.

[*MILLS at table with napkin over his arm seats ladies, etc. Gentlemen rise.*]

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Don't let us disturb you, gentlemen. We are entirely independent. Keep to your own side of the room, if you please.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Good-morning, Mrs. Hartley. Marjory ? When did you come ? Glad to see you, my dear.

[*Greets her.*]

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Thank you, Cousin Richard, and I am glad to be here.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Gerald. [*Aside.*] Oh, by Jove, I forgot. [*To GERALD.*] The heiress. Do you mind being presented ?

GERALD HARTLEY.

On the contrary, I shall be most happy to make the acquaintance of ——

LORD DEYN COURT.

Miss Marjory Heathcote—Mr. Gerald Hartley.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Marjory, luncheon is ready.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*Aside to Richard.*] I say, Deyncourt, don't leave me out. She's deuced pretty.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Mr. Chatfield, Mr. Mixter, my cousin Miss Heathcote.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Marjory, sit down.

[*All seat themselves, LADY JANE, back of table L., MARJORY, R., MRS. HARTLEY, L., STILES and MILLS both wait. Gentlemen light cigarettes. STILES later crosses to table R., and pours coffee.*]

MRS. HARTLEY.

Gerald, come here. I've something to say to you.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Directly, aunt. I have a matter of business to attend to first.

MRS. HARTLEY.

That is so like my nephew, Miss Heathcote. He never lets pleasure interfere with his duty.

[MARJORY coughs.]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I hope, Marjory, that you don't mind a little smoke, because —

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

• Oh, no, Cousin Richard [*coughs again*], I—I rather like it.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*Holding cigarette.*] In the presence of ladies—really—you know. [*Exit MILLS L., for coffee.*]

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Captain Chatfield, the presence of ladies does not affect the situation. When woman occupies her proper sphere, men will have no further need to apologize.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Quite so. I agree with Lady Aylward.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Confound you, Mixter. Know what you are talking about?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Not the remotest idea. Always agree with the ladies.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Mrs. Hartley, does tobacco affect you?

MRS. HARTLEY.

Richard Aylward, don't appeal to me. I said I'd stay to luncheon and see Jane through, and I mean to do it—if—if I choke to death.

[*Enter MILLS ; hands tray with coffee to STILES.*]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Bravo! That's real feminine pluck. Particularly when you don't set yourself up as a woman with advanced ideas.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Heaven forbid. [STILES *pours coffee table R.*]

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Stiles, the bread.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Stiles, fill my cup.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Stiles, the mayonnaise. [*Business with STILES.*]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Jane, I particularly desire Stiles to wait on me. Mills is at your service.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

And if I prefer Stiles?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Your preference will, in this case, give way to mine.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Stiles, come here. [STILES *crosses to LADY JANE.*]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Stiles! [STILES *hesitates between the tables.*]
Stiles! [STILES *crosses to DEYNCOURT.*] I leave for Switzerland in forty minutes. Go pack your port-manteau. For the present, you will act as my valet.

STILES.

Yes, sir. [*Aside.*] O, them mountings!

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Surely, Richard, you are not going to take that fossil abroad with you?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

That is my intention.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

How absurd! For what?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

To secure his services.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Richard Aylward, if you will allow an old friend to interfere, it seems to me, that—well—to put it plainly, you are carrying this joke a little too far. Poor Stiles is better off here with Jane.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Stiles, have you anything to say?

STILES.

STILES [C.] Nothin', my Lord, nothin'. I'll take my chances with the mountings.

[*Exit* L. CHATFIELD and MIXTER *come forward.*]

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Look here, Captain Chatfield, I don't catch on. What's the row?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Oh, nothing. Lady Jane gets the bits between her

teeth occasionally, and then Deyncourt puts on the curb. When he can't get her past old Stiles, he removes him.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

I see. Fine woman.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Oh, Jane's all right. A bit strong minded. Got a weak spot, though.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Head or heart?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Can't say. Wants to marry me.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Whew !

GERALD HARTLEY.

[*Sitting erect.*] That's done.

[DEYNCOURT *takes paper and looks it over.*
Gentlemen stand about table R. GERALD
rises.]

MRS. HARTLEY.

Jane, you have a most excellent cook.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Whatever I do, Mrs. Hartley, it is my intention to do it well. Woman's sphere is unbounded.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Jane hits the nail on the head.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Just so.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

This seems to be drawn up in good form. It only awaits signature. [*Hands pen to GERALD*].

GERALD HARTLEY.

[*Backing towards ladies.*] I really—the more I think of it —

LORD DEYNCOURT.

What business have you to think at all? You agreed to sign.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*Sighing.*] Oh, yes, we all agreed. Where's the pen?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Here. But we'll have Hartley's name first.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Cousin Jane, what are they doing? Do you suppose it has anything to do with me and my legacy?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Don't begin to bother your little head about the foolish vagaries of men.

MRS. HARTLEY.

But, really, now, I hope they won't inveigle Gerald into signing anything against his better judgment. His prospects are poor enough as it is.

[*GERALD crosses to ladies.*]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Gerald, I am convinced this will be your only chance of salvation.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I say, Deyncourt, do you believe Lady Castledown could whistle him back now?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

If it would amuse her, yes.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

And throw him over again?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

If it would amuse her.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Oh, she's a flirt down to the ground.

[*Exit MILLS.*]

MRS. HARTLEY.

I believe they are talking about Helen Castledown.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

It is a shame, when she isn't here to defend herself. [*Rising.*] Richard, I protest.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Jane, "keep to your own side of the room, if you please."

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Richard, the whole room is mine, when gentlemen choose to slander an absent woman.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Slander! Helen Castledown? Ha, ha, ha.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

I say, Chatfield, she must be the very deuce of a woman.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Well, you see, she's so damned heartless. Throw a man over without the least compunction. I can forgive a woman for being wicked—ain't over and above good myself—but I'll be hanged if I can forgive one who has no heart.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

I agree—[CHATFIELD *looks at* MIXTER *warningly*]
—ahem!

LORD DEYN COURT.

The lady in question deserves no mercy at our hands. She has only herself to blame. You will admit *that*, all of you. She started in fair enough. Everything in her favor, youth, beauty, wealth. She had hardly left the schoolroom when she threw herself away on Castledown. Everybody knew what he was, and everybody opposed the match. He—well—he drank himself to death in due time. It was not what you might call a happy marriage. During her brief widowhood she has flirted—mind, I do not exaggerate—when I say, she has flirted with *every man* who has come in her way, and who could *amuse* her. She——

GERALD HARTLEY.

[*Interrupting.*] I think, Dick, we need not go into all that.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Naturally, as you were her last victim.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Well, Jane, even *you* will admit that Helen is a flirt.

LORD DEYN COURT.

I tell you it would be impossible to slander ——

MILLS. [*At R., announces.*] Lady Castledown.

[*Enter LADY CASTLEDOWN, R., from conservatory. She is a tall, beautiful woman of twenty-four, with a fine figure, irresistible eyes, and a fascinating manner that attracts all men to her without apparent effort on her part. She is dressed in a walking costume and a picture hat, which are creations in millinery and add as greatly as possible to her natural charms. All stand. Momentary embarrassment.*]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Do I intrude?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

[*Greeting LADY CASTLEDOWN.*] On the contrary, your arrival is most opportune.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Thank you.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Ahem!

[*CHATFIELD glares at MIXTER.*]

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

[*Aside to DEYN COURT.*] Richard !

LORD DEYN COURT.

Lady Castledown does not need my assurance that her presence could never be an intrusion.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Lord Deyncourt's politeness can hardly veil sarcasm ?

LORD DEYN COURT.

That is for Lady Castledown to decide.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Jane, your brother is insufferable.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

I often find him so.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Thank goodness, he is not my brother. Ah, Mrs. Hartley ? [MRS. HARTLEY *draws herself up and looks coldly on* LADY CASTLEDOWN.] My dear Mrs. Hartley, if I have offended, pray accuse me. You and I can never hold out as enemies. We are both too good-natured.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Helen Castledown, if your own conscience doesn't accuse you, it is no use for me to speak.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Oh, come, my dear aunt ; let bygones be bygones. Follow my example. [*Shakes hands with* LADY CASTLEDOWN.]

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Aside to JANE.*] Cousin Jane, are they still friends?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Overhearing.*] Friends? Gerald and I? Why of course. One can't afford to quarrel with every man one has refused to marry. Life would be too dreary. Jane, present me to this sceptical young lady.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Helen, this is our young cousin, Marjory Heathcote. Miss Heathcote, Lady Castledown.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Oh, the heiress. [*Taking her hand.*] This is interesting. My dear, we are the town's talk—you and I.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

I do not understand.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Of course you don't. You will later on. We shall run in double-harness, you and I, for the rest of this season, and be pointed at as the two women who have ruined the prospects of Mr. Gerald Hartley, the rising man of his age.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

But it isn't true. I hope to ——

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Make it all right? Well, so do I.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Gerald, will you sign this document without further delay? [GERALD goes to table and signs.]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Captain Chatfield, I beg your pardon. I did not recognize you at first. We meet so seldom.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

That isn't my fault, you know.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Indeed! I was under the impression that it was. I receive on Thursdays —

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Chatfield, it is your turn next.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*Aside.*] Confound his scheme.

[*Goes to table and signs. GERALD returns to MARJORY and MRS. HARTLEY.*]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Looking from MIXTER to DEYNCOURT.*] Will Lord Deyncourt present his remaining guest?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Hesitating.*] Beg pardon.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Lord Deyncourt forgets himself. Gerald —

GERALD HARTLEY.

Beg pardon.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Aside.*] They are hedging. [*Aloud.*] Mr. Chatfield?
[*Glances towards MIXTER.*]

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Will Lady Castledown allow me to present my friend, Mr. Mixter—Lady Castledown.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Aside.*] I've got there. I usually do.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Mr. Mixter! Ah, the man from America, with a yacht? I am charmed.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Thank you, Lady Castledown, but please put it, the man from America with *the* yacht.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

As you please.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Which, let me add, is always at your ladyship's service.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Americans are very gallant. I have always found them far more interesting than Englishmen. Mr. Mixter, I receive on Thursdays.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Mixter, your signature, if you please.

[*MIXTER signs.*]

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Helen, have you lunched?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Thank you, yes. [MIXTER *offers pen to* DEYNCOURT. LADY CASTLEDOWN *crosses to table, R.*] May I have some coffee? [*The gentlemen try to serve her.*] And a cigarette?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Bowing.*] Allow me. [*Presents cigarettes.*]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Accepting cigarettes and taking chair offered by* CHATFIELD.] Jane, do you object?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Certainly not. Smoking is no longer man's prerogative.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*With a slight inclination towards* LADY CASTLEDOWN.] Knowing my opinion of a woman who smokes cigarettes, Jane would undoubtedly indulge, if tobacco did not make her quite ill.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Captain Chatfield, a light, please. [*Lights cigarette.*]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Signing name.*] Gentlemen, you will observe that I sign my name without a misgiving.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

That's more than I can say.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Will my name help the cause? Give me the pen.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Folding the paper.*] Lady Castledown's name has already helped the cause.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Rises.*] Richard Aylward, you are in a fiendish mood to-day —

LORD DEYNCOURT.

On the contrary, I am feeling extremely good-natured. I have just been instrumental in saving three fellow mortals from future misery —

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Take care, lest in your zeal you have barred them out of Paradise.

STILES.

[*Door L.*] The carriage is waiting, my Lord.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Oh, Cousin Richard, you are not going now ?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Richard is leaving for Switzerland, Helen.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Ah, and why does Lord Deyncourt turn his back on London at the height of the season ?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Possibly to escape the charms of Lady Castledown.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Stiles, keep an eye on your master ; he is dangerous.

STILES.

I will, my lady, I will.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Remember, Richard, our annual ball comes due on the twenty-first. Your presence is desirable.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

And Cousin Richard, my affairs are really pressing.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

A few weeks does not matter, Marjory. Gerald [*GERALD crosses to R., and shakes hands*], good-bye, old fellow.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Richard Aylward, I hope you are not running off to shirk your responsibilities, because ——

LORD DEYNCOURT.

My dear Mrs. Hartley, if absenting myself from the ladies, is shirking responsibilities, I plead guilty. [*To the men.*] Remember the contract. Wire, if you need me.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Crossing to L.*] Jane, there is mischief in that man's whole bearing. Depend upon it. Your brother and his friends have been hatching some diabolical scheme.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Then we women must combine to blast it.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I'll bet on the women, every time. They'll come in ahead.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

That's so. I agree with you.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Thank goodness! for three weeks at least our lives and reputations are safe.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Holding up paper.*] Thank goodness, this paper will secure our peace of mind for all time. Au revoir, Lady Castledown.

[*Gentlemen, L. DEYNCOURT, LADY CASTLEDOWN, C. Ladies, R.*]

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

CHECKMATED

SCENE.—*Same as Act I. Tables removed, seats distributed, etc. GERALD, CHATFIELD and MIXTER are discovered, GERALD walking back and forth in deep thought at back, CHATFIELD sitting L., in dejected attitude, MIXTER sitting R., in brown study. GERALD stands looking off towards the conservatory up R., as CHATFIELD speaks. Music from ball-room. Strains of waltz, "Dreaming of Love," from Princess Bonnie, during following conversation.*

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*To himself.*] This is a devilish predicament. Wonder where Deyncourt is? By Jove! I didn't think I'd come a cropper quite so soon. Nice thing, when you're really in love, first time in your life, object of your affections kind and gentle, ready to take the bit and pull in harness, nice thing to be brought up like this. [*Takes telegram from pocket and reads it, glancing furtively at HARTLEY and MIXTER.*] "Message received. Meet me in White room, Deyncourt Terrace, night of ball, supper hour. Will attend to details. Deyncourt." What the devil did he call a meeting here for, and why the devil doesn't he come?

GERALD HARTLEY.

[*To himself.*] This is insufferable. To be obliged to lay bare the secret of one's heart before such men as these! Absolutely to ask permission of a Tommy Chatfield and a William Mixter to approach the girl I wish to make my wife! What a consummate ass I was to sign that paper.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*To himself.*] H'm! To think that I, a free-born American citizen, should get into such a box. Came over here to make a try at the British aristocracy. Well, I've got there. Don't suppose I'd have signed that blasted contract if it hadn't been drawn up by a British lord. If a common American born, ahem! had asked me to put my name to such a Tomfool document, I'd have told him to go to thunder. Well, they've got an American at last where he can't move without saying, "By your leave." She's such a clipper, too, and I've got her head to the wind, and ready to make port and now—I've got to heave her to and wait for orders. [*Looks at watch; music stops.*]

[*Enter STILES, R. MIXTER rises, crosses to L. to CHATFIELD. GERALD comes down R.*]

STILES.

Lord Deyncourt will be here directly, gentlemen, and he begs your pardon for keepin' of yer waitin'. We was late in arrivin'. [*Gentlemen sigh. STILES approaches GERALD.*] You will hexcuse me for askin', sir, but there ain't anything serious happened, has there, since we've been a-tourin'?

GERALD HARTLEY.

No, oh, no, Stiles. Nothing has happened yet.

STILES.

Beg pardon, sir. [*Aside.*] Nobody ain't dead, after all.

[*Exit L. Enter DEYNCOURT with three telegrams in his hand, R., comes down C.*]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Good-evening. [*To HARTLEY who meets him and shakes hands.*] How are you, old fellow? H'm! [*Looking from one to another.*] You have lost no time. I came directly I got the telegrams.

GERALD HARTLEY.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Together.*] Telegrams!

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Yes, telegrams! Didn't you each wire to me?

GERALD HARTLEY.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Together.*] Whew. Well, I'll be hanged.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Laughing.*] Upon my word, this is a capital joke.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Joke? Glad you think so.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

It looks to me like a serious matter.

GERALD HARTLEY.

At least, it is in my case.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Look here, Hartley, have you got any mortgage on serious intentions?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Beg pardon for laughing, my dear fellows. Couldn't help it, 'pon honor. The situation demands it. Did you suppose that any one of you had a corner in idiocy?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Oh, come, Dick, don't stand there grinning in that damned unsympathetic manner. Call the meeting to order, and get us out of this scrape.

[*Crosses to extreme R.*]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

It seems to me that you've all been in a deuce of a hurry to get into the scrape, and you may thank your stars that you have a chance of salvation. [*Offers chairs. MIXTER sits L., CHATFIELD R., GERALD R. C., DEYNCOURT moves about. At door.*] Stiles!

STILES.

[*Appearing at dining-room door.*] Yes, sir.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Are they at supper?

STILES.

They are, sir, and everything's uncommonly quiet.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I do not wish to be interrupted for fifteen minutes. See to it, Stiles.

STILES.

I will, sir.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

And, Stiles, do not announce my arrival until supper is over.

STILES.

All right, sir.

[*Exit STILES, L.*]

[*MILLS appears at door R., STILES shows himself again at door L., business of drawing curtains at both doors. Servants remain outside.*]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Bringing down chair C.*] So you are all in love.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

It looks like it. .

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Seating himself.*] Then according to the rules of our society, you must each lay your case before it, and abide by its decision.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Oh, go on.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

And you must each promise to vote for the best interests of the parties concerned.

GERALD HARTLEY.

According to our lights —

LORD DEYNCOURT.

— and to abide by the decision of the majority.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

We agreed to do that when we signed.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Precisely. Now whose case shall we consider first?
[*Silence.*] Hard lines, aren't they, Tommy?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I say, Deyncourt, there's no call for you to rub it in. You may get scotched yourself some day.

LORD DEYN COURT.

I doubt it.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Suppose we give Mixter the first show, as he is our guest.

LORD DEYN COURT.

I was about to propose Mixter.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

I've no objections to being first, but I demand fair treatment.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Of course. Well, then, Mixter, we are led to infer from your calling a meeting that you wish to commit matrimony.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*Aside.*] Sounds like breaking a commandment, put that way.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

The inference is about correct. I have met, here in London, the lady that I should like to make my wife.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

And, gaining permission from us to propose, do you think the lady would accept you?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

I think that I have a good chance. She's a fine woman, and she accepts my attentions.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

That proves nothing.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

She knows a good boat when she sees it, she is perfectly aware of the value of money, and she doesn't dislike me.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Hm! From what I know of the sex, I should say your chances were good.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Then mine must be deuced poor. All I've got to say for myself is—that—I'm over head and ears in love. Can't eat, nor sleep, and I've no prospects, and no money.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

You forget your handsome face.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Don't add sarcasm to your other charms, Deyncourt.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Seriously, Tommy, there are a great many women in the world who would accept a man for his looks.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Hm ! Ever proposed yourself ?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

No-o. Never dared to risk it.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Well, Lady Castledown isn't that sort.

ALL.

Lady Castledown ?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Oh, ho !

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

What do you mean by oh, ho ?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

I beg pardon, but as my case was to be considered first, and Lady Castledown has led me to hope ——

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Lady Castledown !

LORD DEYNCOURT.

The deuce !

GERALD HARTLEY.

Oh, come, Mixter, that is out of the question.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

This grows interesting. Gerald, are you her victim a second time ?

GERALD HARTLEY.

No, oh, no ! In fact, Dick, I've lost all sense of

honor. I'm as helplessly in love as poor Tommy, and the girl I wish to marry, the only girl in the world for me, is Marjory Heathcote, the heiress.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

So you have swallowed your pride. And Marjory?

GERALD HARTLEY.

I can't answer for her until I get leave to speak.

[*Rises and goes up c., despondently.*]

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Crossing to CHATFIELD, L. C.*] Well, I don't suppose Lady Castledown can marry us both, but we needn't vote against each other. You give me your vote —

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I'll be damned if I will. [*Rises, crosses to R.*]

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Crossing to R. C.*] Why, I'll give you mine in return—then we'll take our chances, see.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*To GERALD who comes down L.*] Look here, we must dispose of Mixter's case. S'pose Helen would for a moment consider his proposal?

GERALD HARTLEY.

Can't say. Her funds are low. She has been living extravagantly, and he is phenomenally wealthy; twenty-seven million is about his figure.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Crossing to GERALD and speaking aside.*] Oh, but—look at him! I say, Gerald, it would hardly be

the thing for us to let her throw herself away on a little beggar like that.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Put it to vote.

LORD DEYN COURT.

[*Returning to c.*] Shall we, or shall we not, allow William Mixer to propose to Lady Helen Castle-down? Answer, individually.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I vote against Mixer every time. It's too deuced presumptuous of him to think of it.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Well, I suppose she's brought it on herself. Undoubtedly she has encouraged him.

GERALD HARTLEY.

I must also vote against Mr. Mixer. I can't sanction so decided a mesalliance.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Oh, come now, I like that. The alliance is all right, provided the lady doesn't object.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*To MIXTER.*] Confound it, man! Can't you see? You're not in a position to approach her. You haven't any grandfather.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*To CHATFIELD.*] O-h, that's the hitch. [*To others.*] Grandfather's all right. Designs boats. Never heard of him?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Beg pardon, but we are shooting wide of the mark.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

So I should judge, time being short.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[To MIXTER.] You're so devilish stupid.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

I agree with you. However, you'll all admit that I didn't drag grandfather into this business. He'd make a better show in a yacht race. Make a try for the cup, and you'll appreciate the old man's talent.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Oh, shut up, Mixter. You're out of it. Mr. President, will you put my case to vote?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

As Tommy so aptly puts it, Mixter is out of it. [MIXTER *disgusted, goes up stage*; CHATFIELD *comes R. C.*] Now who favors Captain Chatfield's suit? Gerald? [A pause.]

GERALD HARTLEY.

I'm sorry to oppose you, Chatfield, but as Lady Castledown's advisor—I have the honor of attending to her affairs—I must vote against you for financial reasons. It would be impossible for you two to live on your united incomes.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

You might leave that for us to decide.

GERALD HARTLEY.

But, you see, you're in love, man.

LORD DEYN COURT.

And not capable of deciding with judgment.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Therefore I must vote against Captain Chatfield.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Comes down R.*] I follow Mr. Hartley's lead.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Give your reasons, Mixter.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Same as yours in my case.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I don't understand.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

"You're so devilish stupid," you see.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Look here, explain yourself, Mixter, or there'll be a row.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Gentlemen, I must call you to order.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

But I demand an explanation.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Oh, that's all right. In the first place, you are my

rival, and wouldn't give me a chance, and in the second place, I don't know your grandfather.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Damn it, man. My grandfather is an earl.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Is that so? Well, I don't know him personally, and you see he may not be a good earl.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*Aside.*] Oh, hang it. This is enough to drive a man to drink.

[*Goes up stage. DEYN COURT follows and brings him down.*]

LORD DEYN COURT.

I would give you my vote, Tommy, if it would do you any good, but you see it wouldn't. Next boy.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Beg pardon, Dick, but this isn't child's play. I object to the tone of these proceedings.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Hm! This is another pair of shoes.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Quite so! Boot on the other leg.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Look here, Gerald, I've stood your friend pretty well for a good many years; I don't propose to go back on you now. I don't mind admitting that the

whole idea of this scheme occurred to me in my perhaps over-zealous desire to save you from Lady Castledown.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

And I should like to know what reason you can give for all this hanged nonsense about "saving men from Lady Castledown."

LORD DEYNCOURT.

We discussed the lady in question at our last meeting, and you all agreed —

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*Interrupting.*] Oh, yes, we all agreed that she had her faults, but I'll be hanged if, when you come to know her, you don't fall in love with her failings.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Which goes to prove my original theory, that love makes an idiot of a man.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

By Jove, I'd like to see you come a cropper.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I never have yet, and although I admit that women are treacherous cattle to handle, I have no misgivings.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

"He laughs best, who laughs last."

GERALD HARTLEY.

I am patiently waiting.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Looking at watch.*] And time is nearly up. To return to Hartley's case. I hoped when I left England that, with Helen Castledown out of the race and our little Marjory to the fore, Gerald would recover his senses, would realize the girl's charms, would forget for the time that she was the heiress and would fall in love —

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Oh, ho !

LORD DEYNCOURT.

And what do *you* mean by oh, ho ?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*Quoting.*] "What the deuce has love to do with it !"

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Don't fling a man's words back like that, Tommy ; it isn't exactly civil. Wait until I have finished, and then you can oh, ho till you are black in the face. I say that I hoped that Hartley would see his way to proposing marriage to my ward, Marjory Heathcote. It would be a most suitable marriage, would settle a family feud, would restore the rightful heir, and all that sort of thing. There can be no objections, and I hope you will all follow my lead and vote in favor of Gerald Hartley's suit.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

It strikes me you are taking a good deal for granted. How do you know that we approve of the young lady ?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

That's so.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Or that we are cock-sure that Hartley is the man to make her happy. He can be deuced disagreeable at times.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

I agree with you.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Thought you would. Well, then, I vote against Hartley.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

And so do I.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Look here, this is a beastly way to use a man.

LORD DEYN COURT.

I hope you are not retaliating. We all agreed to be perfectly fair.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

[*At door R., speaking outside.*] Stiles, let me pass at once.

STILES.

[*Outside.*] But, my lady, I have most hexplicit orders.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Orders? Then I countermand them. I tell you I must see Lord Deyncourt at once.

STILES.

But, my lord is engaged.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

That is impossible.

STILES.

Not at all, my lady.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Stiles, you are impertinent.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*To gentlemen.*] One moment, please. [*Goes to door R ; STILES shows in doorway confused.*] Jane, what's the row ?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

I wish to see you at once, Richard.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Sorry not to oblige you.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

[*Trying to force an entrance.*] Stiles, let me pass.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Stiles, let her ladyship pass at your peril.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

This is outrageous. [*Going away.*] I shall return directly with reinforcements.

STILES.

[*Coming inside.*] Don't ask me to face more than one at a time, sir, at my age ?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

That will be all right, Stiles ; now to your post.
[*Exit* STILES, R. *To gentlemen.*] Our meeting is practically over. The majority in each case is against a proposal. You must submit to the year's test.

GERALD HARTLEY.

That means that I am not to communicate with, or to see Miss Heathcote for one year from to-day, and that I am not to explain anything or even to bid her good-bye. And I have led her to hope—Oh, that is abominable. [Goes down L.]

[MIXTER, R., DEYNCOURT, R. C., CHATFIELD, L. C., GERALD, L.]

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

That may be on the cards, Hartley, but I call it deuced uncivil of Deyncourt to turn us out of his house like this, on the night of the last ball of the season, too. We've lost a good half of it already, waiting for him.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I couldn't help that, you know.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I have engaged the first waltz after supper with Helen Castledown, and I have led her to expect — Good Heavens ! what a position to put a fellow in.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Lady Castledown promised me a dance to-night, and I told her I had something of importance to say to her. She'll set me down for a chump.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Well, you have succeeded in getting yourselves into a mess. As it is no fault of mine, you can't expect me to get you out. However, as you have all gone so far, I think we must make a concession, and allow one last interview. A year from to-day I predict that you will all be heart-whole and thankful to me for originating this scheme.

STILES.

[*Door L.*] Lady Jane's a comin' back, and she looks that determined.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Stiles, let her pass.

MILLS.

[*Door R.*] Miss Marjory's a comin'.

STILES.

And Mrs. Hartley, she's a comin' too.

LORD DEYN COURT.

All right. Now, my good fellows, if you will pass around through the conservatory, you will oblige me and divert suspicion.

[*Exeunt CHATFIELD and MIXTER hurriedly.*]

GERALD HARTLEY.

I suppose this is final. There is no help.

LORD DEYN COURT.

None, at present. Sorry for you, old fellow.
[*Exit GERALD dejectedly. STILES draws curtain L. MILLS draws curtain R. Enter simultaneously, LADY JANE and MRS. HARTLEY L., MARJORY R.;*

DEYNCOURT *attempting to get off R. meets MARJORY.*
Aside.] Trapped, by Jove.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

[L.] Now, Richard, explain yourself.
 [DEYNCOURT *comes down c.*]

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[R.] Yes, Cousin Richard, we want to know —

MRS. HARTLEY.

Where is Gerald and what —
 [*Enter LADY CASTLEDOWN from conservatory.*]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Coming down between MARJORY and DEYNCOURT.*]
 Ah, Lord Deyncourt, so you have returned.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I have returned.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Oh, yes, he has returned, in the dead of night, secretly, and shut himself into this room with guarded doors, the house full of guests, and I wish to know what it means.

MRS. HARTLEY.

And Gerald is missing. [*Sits in chair L.*]

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

And we've stolen away from the supper-room to demand an explanation.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

And I have just arrived.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Indeed? We should congratulate ourselves that you have come at all. Why so late?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Tossing her head.*] And if I said that I timed myself in order that you and I should appear together?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I should say — [*Aside.*] How the devil did she know what time I was expected?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Beg pardon?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I should say that I never was so honored before.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

But you wired yesterday that you should not return for the ball.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

And we were so disappointed.

MRS. HARTLEY.

And Gerald promised to fill your place.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Oh, he did, did he?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Aside.*] And he hasn't come at all.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Now, why are you here?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I must give a woman's reason ; I changed my mind.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Sarcastically.*] That is so like you. And if I tell you that I met Gerald Hartley in the conservatory just now.

LADIES.

Met Gerald ?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Yes, and that he looked remarkably unhappy —

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Aside.*] The deuce.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

You will perhaps give a woman's reason for that too.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Doubtless I could, but seriously, ladies, I need refreshment. I have had no supper. You will excuse me. [*Offering arm to LADY CASTLEDOWN.*] Lady Castledown, will you accompany me ?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Thank you, no. I prefer to make my entrance with a more attractive man. Send Captain Chatfield to me.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

As you please. [*Aside.*] We've saved Tommy. That scores one.

[*Exit DEYNCOURT L., four ladies across front*

from R. to L., thus : MARJORY, LADY CASTLEDOWN, LADY JANE, MRS. HARTLEY.]

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Now what does this mean?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Jane, I told you three weeks ago that Richard had some scheme afoot.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Oh, dear, I hope it isn't going to injure Gerald.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Perhaps Stiles would know.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Happy thought! Call Stiles.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

[*Calling off L.*] Stiles! I will question him.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

No, let me, and—please pretend not to hear.

[*Enter STILES. LADY CASTLEDOWN and LADY JANE L. MRS. HARTLEY crosses to R. to MARJORY. STILES comes down C. MRS. HARTLEY sits extreme R.*]

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Approaching STILES, C.*] Stiles, did you have a pleasant journey?

STILES.

Yes, miss, barrin' the furrin' inconveniences.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

And is your rheumatism better?

STILES.

Oh, yes, miss. I'm quite limber. [*Aside.*] Now what do they want?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

What made you come home so suddenly?

STILES.

Lord Deyncourt's orders, miss.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Well, but he sent word that he should not return for some weeks.

STILES.

I know, miss, but when them telegrams come, he ordered his portmanteau packed at once.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Oh!

STILES.

I was that worried, thinkin' some one was ill. There wasn't, was there?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Oh, no. Everybody is well.

STILES.

Hm! If nothin's the matter, then why was them telegrams sent, and why did Lord Richard hurry home to shut himself up with them bachelers?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Bachelors?

STILES.

Oh, Lord, what have I said?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Nothing, Stiles. You can go. And—Stiles, will you bring Mrs. Hartley an ice? You will find her in the conservatory.

MRS. HARTLEY.

[*Aside.*] Good Heavens, I never eat ices.

[*Rises. Exit STILES, L.*]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Laughing and crossing to MARJORY.*] “Them bachelers.” We’ve got the key.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

And little else.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Please, Lady Castledown, tell us what you think?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN:

I would rather wait until the end of the evening.

[*Music begins outside.*]

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

The music is starting, we must return to the ball-room.

[*Goes towards ball-room, L.*]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Stopping her.*] One moment, Jane. Richard’s sudden return means mischief. We have no time to

organize for mutual protection. We are helpless women [*laughing*], in the hands of designing men. Don't let them suspect it.

[*Enter couple from conservatory and pass through room. The lady bows to MRS. HARTLEY who looks at her through her lorgnette. Gentleman approaches from ballroom, L., as if looking for some one; sees LADY JANE, she takes his arm and goes off L.*]

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Oh, please, Lady Castledown, what must I do?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Ask Mrs. Hartley.

[*Two or three gentlemen approach LADY CASTLEDOWN from R. and L. and talk. MARJORY turns to MRS. HARTLEY.*]

MRS. HARTLEY.

[*L. F.*] Do, child? [*Leads her down R.*] Come here, and I will tell you. Accept Gerald Hartley.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Accept Gerald Hartley?

MRS. HARTLEY.

Yes, at once.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Aside to MARJORY.*] That will score one against the conspirators.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

But he hasn't asked me.

MRS. HARTLEY.

He will to-night, mark my words. [*Aside.*] Now let me find him. [*Going up to conservatory and using lorgnette; to MARJORY.*] Do you see Stiles in the conservatory with that ice?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Yes, Mrs. Hartley. Shall I come with you?

MRS. HARTLEY.

No, dear. [*Aside.*] If I must undertake Gerald and an ice at one and the same time, I prefer to be alone.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Across to MRS. HARTLEY.*] I know others that would.

[*Exit MRS. HARTLEY to conservatory. MARJORY is led away, L., by one of the gentlemen who presents dance order. Enter CHATFIELD, R.*]

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*To LADY CASTLEDOWN.*] Our waltz, is it not?

[*Gentlemen withdraw. CHATFIELD presents dance order.*]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

So you have come at last.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*Sighing.*] Yes, I have come. [*Coming down c.*] Shall we dance?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

As you please. [*Looking at him intently.*] What is the matter with you?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I can't tell you.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Then shall we dance?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Dancing seems a hollow mockery to-night.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Are you ill? Can I help you?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Don't look at me like that or I shall blurt it all out.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Perhaps it would be better for you if you did.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Perhaps. But I can't, you know.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Why not?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Gave my promise I wouldn't. Word of honor.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

To whom?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Can't even tell you that.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Then supposing you leave me.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

That is just what I am about to do. The only question with me lies between suicide and exile.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Has she been so cruel?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

She! Who?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

The unfeeling woman who has rejected you.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

She hasn't rejected me, because I haven't asked her.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Then why don't you ask her?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD..

That's just it; I can't, you know.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Aside.*] This is a novel situation. [To CHATFIELD.] You are not losing your mind?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Can't say. Heart's gone, and seem to be breaking up generally.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Can I do anything for you?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Look here, Lady Castledown, I've got something to

say to you, and I don't know how to say it. [*Aside.*]
Lord, what a cad I feel.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Shall we go into the conservatory?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Alone! You and I? No, it wouldn't be safe.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

I think I had better speak to Lord Deyncourt and have a physician summoned.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Confound Deyncourt!

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Why confound Deyncourt? Oh, I begin to see.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Well, I may as well out with it. I am going to Egypt.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

When?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Directly. To-morrow, next day. I can't tell, but I shall not see you again, and I must bid you good-bye, here, to-night.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

How long shall you be gone?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

One year, probably.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

And you expect her to wait for you a whole year?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Whom?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

The lady you are afraid to ask.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Do you think she would?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

There are women that would. I wouldn't.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Don't say that.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

But it's the truth.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Nevertheless, I shall come back a year from to-day
and ask her to marry me.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

I hope she will refuse you.

[*Waltz ends. Enter LORD DEYN COURT, L., and
others.*]

LORD DEYN COURT.

[*To LADY CASTLEDOWN.*] Beg pardon.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*Retreating.*] Gad, I'm done for.

[*Wanders away, R., to conservatory.*]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*To* LADY CASTLEDOWN.] You are wanted in the ball-room. Jane sent me to fetch you.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

I'm not in a mood for dancing to-night.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

That does not signify. One often has to sacrifice oneself in this life.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

And if one does not choose —

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Look here, Helen, what particular mischief are you up to?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Mischief? I never felt more serious in my life.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Did you refuse him? Poor beggar.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Looking intently at* DEYNCOURT.] Why should you pity him? [*Aside.*] He is laughing at me.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I can't help it. He looks so unhappy. Your victims generally do.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

I never harmed you at least. Why do you dislike me so much?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

It isn't dislike, it's fear.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Looking at him sadly.*] Oh! [*Laughing.*] Make your mind easy, for *you* are perfectly safe.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

But you are so irresistible, you know.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Am I! Hm! I cannot imagine any circumstances under which you would be called upon to resist me. [*Music plays a two-step.*]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Nor I. Will you come?

[*LADY CASTLEDOWN takes his arm. Exeunt, L. MARJORY and GERALD have entered from conservatory in earnest conversation, and stand together, L.*]

GERALD HARTLEY.

[*Looking uncomfortable.*] You do not understand.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Oh, yes, I understand. You are going away.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Yes, to San Francisco, for a year.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

I thought you said Japan.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Did I? Well, it's all the same, Japan, California, New Zealand. One place is much like another, if you go against your will and leave all that you care for behind.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

I suppose you mean the property.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Marjory—Miss Heathcote.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Or is it Lady Castledown?

GERALD HARTLEY.

Why do you so misunderstand me?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Then why don't you explain yourself?

GERALD HARTLEY.

Because I cannot.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Yesterday you were full of plans for the summer. You were to fish in Berkshire and shoot in Scotland. We were to meet each other continually. To-night you—wish to—to bid me good-bye for a whole year, and—what have I done? [*Half crying.*]

GERALD HARTLEY.

My dear child —

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*With dignity.*] Don't call me that. I am a woman—and—you can go. There are other men.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Marjory, you break my heart.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

You can get it mended—in China. [*Enter DEYN-COURT, LADY CASTLEDOWN, and MIXTER.*] Cousin Richard, are you coming for me?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Beg pardon. [GERALD *withdraws.*] Our dance, is it not?

GERALD HARTLEY.

[*Going off.*] Does she care? [*Exit GERALD, L.*]

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Cousin Richard, one moment please. Are you sure I cannot give the property to—that man?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

What has Gerald done to make you call him “that man”?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

He, oh, I can't tell you; but I shall never have another happy moment until—I pay him back.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

And must it be in coin?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Yes, in good hard coin, that will humiliate his pride and make him bow down in shame. I hate him.

LORD DEYN COURT.

[*Aside.*] I don't half like this! [*To MARJORY.*] My dear girl, don't be precipitate. Take time to consider; a year, say —

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Oh, yes, always a year.

LORD DEYN COURT.

[*Aside.*] What does she mean by that? [*To MARJORY.*] A year is not long, you know.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Isn't it? Perhaps not, at your age. At mine, it seems an eternity.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Hm! Well, as nothing can be done in regard to the property for one year, at least, you will have to wait. Shall we dance?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Taking his arm.*] As well do that as anything.
[*Exeunt, L.*]

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*To LADY CASTLEDOWN.*] This may seem a little abrupt, but we Americans generally come right to the point. Don't beat about the bush.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Aside.*] Another victim. [*To MIXTER.*] Yes?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

I am thinking of marrying.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Indeed? [*Aside.*] He evidently means business.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Consequently I shall return to America at once.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Aside.*] The little beggar is trying to hedge.
[*To MIXTER.*] Is she an American?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Oh, no—no, indeed. In point of fact, she is a most fascinating Englishwoman, but I am so situated that—well—in fact— [*Aside.*] Lord, how warm I am!

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

If she has accepted you, why do you leave England?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

But she hasn't accepted me, and I am obliged to go away at once, to-morrow, possibly, without asking her.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Does she know that you wish to marry her?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Well, I should hope so; I've tried to make it pretty plain to her.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

And what excuse shall you give her for leaving so abruptly, without asking her?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Aside.*] I wish that blessed English Lord was in my place. [*To* LADY CASTLEDOWN.] Well, you see, I shall tell her that I must devote one year to business.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

One year?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Yes, it will take about a year to—to find out how much I am worth.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

It would take me about fifteen minutes to find out how much I was worth.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

May I come back a year from to-day and tell you?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Tell me what?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

How—how much I am worth.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Oh, yes, you may tell me, but you can hardly expect me to be interested. I shall probably have forgotten your very existence by then. [*Music stops.*]

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Aside.*] Got it right in the neck that time. [*To* LADY CASTLEDOWN.] Nevertheless I shall come.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Offering hand.*] Until then ——

WILLIAM MIXTER.

I am dismissed?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

For one year, yes. [*Exit MIXTER to conservatory. Music of last waltz.*] I think I understand Richard Deyncourt's little game. Ah! Here he comes.

[DEYNCOURT *enters from ball-room, L.; crosses to*
LADY CASTLEDOWN.]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

This is the last waltz, Helen. Will you dance?
[*Offers arm.*]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Taking his arm.*] With pleasure.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

You take my breath away.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Did you expect me to refuse?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

You do not often accept.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Withdrawing arm.*] Sometimes, when taken un-
awares. Give me time for reflection—say, one year.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Aside.*] Does she suspect?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

And my answer might be different. [*Enter MARJORY to LADY CASTLEDOWN, L., GERALD following at a distance, pauses at back.*] Well, Marjory?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

The ball is ending. What do you think now?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Again offering arm to LADY CASTLEDOWN.*] Will you come?

[*Enter LADY JANE and CHATFIELD, R.; LADY JANE advances to C.; CHATFIELD remains at back.*]

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

For once I am baffled. Helen, can you explain?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Aside.*] I must get out of this. [*Goes up C.*]
[*Enter MRS. HARTLEY and MIXTER from conservatory. MRS. HARTLEY advances to C., MIXTER remains at back.*]

MRS. HARTLEY.

Helen Castledown, what do you make of it all?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Behold the guilty man; ask him.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Coming down C.*] Guilty? Of what?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Here is Captain Chatfield talking about suicide —

MRS. HARTLEY.

And poor, dear Mr. Mixter banished to America —

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

And Mr. Hartley looking for a country where broken hearts are mended —

LORD DEYNCOURT.

And Lady Castledown asks me to explain?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Richard Deyncourt, before you plot with your bachelor friends against our sex, be sure you understand at least one woman.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

At present I only wish to dance with one woman. Will you come?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Not until I tell you that I believe the woman exists who will bring you on your knees at her feet. And when, a year from now, you lie prostrate before her, I hope that she will simply laugh at you. Come.

POSITIONS

MIXTER
CHATFIELD

LADY CASTLEDOWN AND
DEYNCOURT

MRS. HARTLEY
MARJORY

GERALD
LADY JANE.

CURTAIN

ACT III.

WHICH WINS?

SCENE.—*Shrubbery and garden at the Towers. Rustic benches, etc.* LADY JANE discovered picking rose from bush up c. Comes down stage to seat L. F., during speech.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Why did Helen Castledown insist on my bringing Marjory here for the twenty-first? I had to break with the Merediths to do it. Just now, too, when the guards are in their old barracks close at hand, and Captain Chatfield is about to rejoin his regiment. [*Sits.*] I offered to send Marjory down without me. Helen would not listen to that. She said that my presence was of vast importance to her at this particular time.

[*Enter* MRS. HARTLEY, L.]

MRS HARTLEY.

Bless me, Jane, when did you arrive?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

[*Rising.*] Half an hour ago, and you?

MRS. HARTLEY.

Oh, I came down yesterday. Helen's orders. Now will you please tell me why we all do just as Helen bids? I am sure I ought not to be here to-

day. Poor dear Lady Somers particularly wanted me this week. A most charming house party, but no, Lady Castledown orders and I obey.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Our cases are similar. I am due elsewhere but, as you see, I am here.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Do you think Helen has any surprise in store for us? What does the twenty-first signify?

[*They sit on bench, L.*]

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

I haven't the remotest idea.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Has Marjory?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

I can't tell. Marjory is mysterious at times.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Does she ever say anything about Gerald?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

I do not think that she has mentioned his name since the night of our annual ball.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Let me see, that was about a year ago. Well, I did my best. Everything was in train, the young people appeared to be head over ears in love, and then off rushed Gerald on that senseless and extravagant tour. Now, Jane, did that little goose refuse him, or did he give her the slip?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

I cannot tell. He writes to Helen Castledown.

MRS. HARTLEY.

What? Then she has him on the string again?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

It looks so.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Does Marjory know it?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Oh, yes.

MRS. HARTLEY.

And is on good terms with Helen?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

• Apparently.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Well, I've nothing more to say.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Perhaps when Gerald comes home, we shall understand the situation.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Well, I don't know, I never have understood a Hartley yet, and I never expect to. There was my poor, dear husband, it wasn't my fault that I didn't find out all about him. Jane Aylward, that man died a mystery to me, after I had spent fifteen years asking him questions which he never answered.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

[*Aside.*] Poor man. [*To MRS. HARTLEY.*] Mrs. Hartley, join our ranks. Adopt our advanced ideas in regard to woman's sphere. Then if you must have dealings with men, take the lead.

MRS. HARTLEY.

My dear Jane, I never could.

[*Enter MARJORY, R., with flowers and scissors.*]

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Ah, Mrs. Hartley, you here, too? Isn't this lovely?

MRS. HARTLEY.

[*Rising and greeting MARJORY.*] My dear child, I am glad to see you once more.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Thank you. I am cutting flowers for Lady Castledown.
[*Cuts roses.*]

MRS. HARTLEY.

Does she expect other arrivals?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

She does not say.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

[*Rising.*] Marjory, have you found out anything?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Coming down c.*] Only that Lady Castledown insists that this is an important day in her life, that she expects to pose as the champion of her sex, and that her friends must rally about her.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Hm !

MRS. HARTLEY.

I'm sure we are rallying to the best of our ability, but how can we help her, if we don't know what we are here for.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

We can wait developments.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

And while we are waiting, lose other opportunities.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Silly.*] Now, Cousin Jane, you are thinking of the Scots Guards up North.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Marjory, I am ashamed of you.

[*Walking indignantly down L. Enter LADY CASTLEDOWN, L. U. E., comes down C. MARJORY and MRS. HARTLEY, L., LADY CASTLEDOWN, C., LADY JANE, R.*]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Oh, here you are. One can't blame you for lingering on such a day as this. Marjory, dear, they are waiting for the flowers, and, Jane, you must feel in need of rest after your long journey. Mrs. Hartley, will you kindly act as hostess for a few moments. I have one or two little matters to look after.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Certainly, Helen, I will do anything that I can, but I never like working in the dark.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

In the dark? Why everything is as clear as day.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Perhaps, to those that understand.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

I cannot explain now. Only trust me, and stand by me.

MRS. HARTLEY.

That is all very well, Helen, but I should like to receive a definite order.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Very well, don't let the enemy escape.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Will there be any wounded?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Possibly.

MRS. HARTLEY.

I don't half like this. Come, Jane.

[*Exeunt* MRS. HARTLEY and LADY JANE to house, L.]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*To* MARJORY *who is going off.*] Marjory, one moment.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Coming back ; to* LADY CASTLEDOWN.] Yes?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

If Gerald Hartley should come here to-day [MARJORY *starts*], you will treat him kindly?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*With dignity.*] If he comes, I will not see him.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Marjory, you are very young. Let me give you a bit of advice. Never place yourself in a false position for the sake of revenge. Many a girl has ruined her chance of happiness for life by so doing.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Taking LADY CASTLEDOWN'S hand.*] I am your slave and I will obey. [*Kisses her.*]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Good girl. Now run away. [*Exit MARJORY to house, L. LADY CASTLEDOWN sits on bench, L.*] Will they come? [*Taking envelope from her dress.*] Gerald, at least, is up to the mark. [*Reads telegram.*] "Shall arrive on the twenty-first. Make it possible for me to see Marjory at once. Gerald." [*Enter servant with two telegrams. LADY CASTLEDOWN opens them. Laughs.*] Captain Chatfield has kept *his* word. Asks to be received on the twenty-first. Hm! Will turn him over to Jane. William Mixer, the dear little man with a yacht, has returned to England and begs an interview. Must get Mrs. Hartley to find out how much he is worth. [*Rising.*] Now if I can put my hand on Richard Aylward. [*Enter STILES, R.*] Well, Stiles, where did you come from?

STILES.

From Lord Deyncourt, madam, with a letter which he hordered me to deliver to you in person.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Taking letter.*] Are you staying in the neighborhood? [Opens letter.]

STILES.

No, Lady Castledown, we are not what you might call stayin', we are a-passin' through.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Absently reading.*] Beg pardon?

STILES.

We are always a-passin' thro' at present, Lady Helen. We don't stay nowheres, Lord Deyncourt is that restless.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Aside.*] Hm! Restless, is he? [To STILES.] Lord Deyncourt asks me to send him an answer by you. Is he near at hand?

STILES.

He is, ma'am.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

A verbal message will do. Tell him I am at leisure and will receive him here.

STILES.

Thank you kindly, Lady Castledown. [*Going off.*]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Stiles, what do you mean by that? Why should you thank me kindly for receiving Lord Deyncourt?

STILES.

You will hexcuse me, Lady Helen, but I feel hanxious about my master.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Indeed? And why?

STILES.

He is that oneasy, a-movin' from pillar to post. I'm weary with a-packin' and a-unpackin' of his luggage.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

I do not understand. You talk in riddles.

STILES.

If it's a riddle, Lady Helen, it seems to me oncommon easy to guess.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Then you know the answer?

STILES.

I'm an old man, Lady Helen, an' I've been in sarvice a-many years, and I ain't easy deceived. Lord Deyncourt is in love. That's the answer.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Indeed? Why do you tell me?

STILES.

Perhaps it's takin' a liberty, Lady Helen, but Mr. Richard, beggin's pardon, Lord Deyncourt an' myself, we've been oncommon good friends ever since he was a lad and I can't abide to see him took in.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Taken in?

STILES.

Yes, took in. He's that innocent where the women is concerned.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

You are a very wise old man, Stiles, why don't *you* give him a word of advice?

STILES.

He wouldn't take it comin' from me. Now if you —

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Why do you ask me?

STILES.

I wasn't born yesterday, Lady Helen, an' it's allers been my 'abit to keep my eyes open. I've noticed that wherever we go, we're pretty sure to meet you.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Aside.*] Naturally.

STILES.

And I thought that you might know the lady.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

The lady?

STILES.

Yes, the lady as is playin' the mischief with Lord Deyncourt's peace of mind.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Then you wish me to warn him of his danger?

STILES.

Oh, Lord, no, Lady Castledown.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

How can I help you?

STILES.

[*Looking at* LADY CASTLEDOWN *slyly.*] You wouldn't be willin' to undertake Lord Richard yourself —

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

To what, Stiles?

STILES.

To—[*aside*] Lord, ain't I a-goin' it? [*to* LADY CASTLEDOWN] to take Lord Richard in hand yourself, an' save him from that schemin' woman, whoever she be?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Aside.*] Shades of my rejected lovers, hear him! [*To* STILES.] You ask too much, Stiles. Your master must take his chance with the rest of them. You can go now.

STILES.

[*Hesitating.*] Your ladyship will pardon me for bein' so free?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Of course. You are privileged. Now go.

[*Exit* STILES, R. ; *enter* MARJORY *laughing*, L.
LADY CASTLEDOWN *watches* STILES *hobbling off.*]

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Oh, Helen, such a joke. [*Pause.*] Why, is that Stiles?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

That is Stiles.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

How very extraordinary. Then Cousin Richard must be in the neighborhood?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

That goes without saying.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

But he started for the continent before we left London.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

He is probably en route.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

He takes a very devious route then.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Never mind him. What is the joke?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Solemnly.*] The siege has begun.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Then why have you abandoned your post?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Cousin Jane and Mrs. Hartley are holding the fort.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

And keeping the enemy in check?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

For the present ; but you are wanted.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Explain yourself, Marjory?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Captain Chatfield and Mr. Mixter have just arrived. They met at the door, asked to see you at once, glared at each other, and—there they are.
[Laughs.]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Together?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Indeed, no. That would not be safe. Cousin Jane has the delectable Tommy in hand in the blue-room, and Mrs. Hartley is smoothing down the American in the pink.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[Reflecting.] They are in good hands. Go back, dear, and say that I will be at liberty directly.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

But, Helen [laughing], it would be a pity for me to disturb them.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Of course. Send a servant.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Aside.*] Why does she linger in this shrubbery?
[*Goes off meditating.*]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Looking off, R.*] The enemy approaches. [*Enter DEYNCOURT, from R.*] Now for the tug of war. [*To DEYNCOURT.*] You arrive on the heels of your messenger, Lord Deyncourt.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Old Stiles? Yes, I met him at your gates. [*Offering hand.*] Have you no greeting for me?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Refusing to take his hand.*] I greet my guests. Not men who send servants in advance to demand interviews.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I do not understand your attitude towards me, Helen. It has become intolerable, and I am here to-day to have it explained. What have I done to offend you?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Have I said that I was offended?
[*Sits on bench, L.*]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Not in words.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

How else, then?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

By most persistent snubbing, at all times and in all places. And we have met rather often in the past year.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Was that my fault?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

That we have met? N-n-no. It has only happened so.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Aside.*] He evidently believes that. [*To DEYNCOURT.*] Well?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

You and I used to be good friends.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

That was before you began to say unkind things behind my back.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Unkind things? I never said anything behind your back, but the truth.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

O, yes, you have.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

What things?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

You cannot deny that you have called me a flirt.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Isn't that truth ?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

I—amuse myself.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

At other people's expense.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Not always ; the other people seem to enjoy themselves.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Up to a certain point, and then ——

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Oh, if you are coming to that. Is it my fault that men find me attractive ? I don't ask them to run after me.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Not intentionally, perhaps.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Well, you have taken good care to warn your friends against me.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I ? I don't know what you mean.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Oh, yes, you do. [*Rising.*] Where is Mr. Mixter ? Why did Captain Chatfield start so abruptly for Egypt, last year ?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

But they have come back. That is one reason I am here. To warn you.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

You have done your share of warning.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Do you know why they have returned?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

I can guess.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Then I beg of you to be careful.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Why this sudden solicitude? I have managed my own affairs heretofore without assistance.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

And at times have managed them very badly. For instance, why did you marry Castledown?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

For a title. That was what you said at the time.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I could see no other reason.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Sometimes, when a girl fails to win the man she cares for, she consoles herself by marrying the man she despises.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Starting.*] Then there *was* some one?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

There usually is.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

And now that you are free?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

He has become impossible.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

And failing him?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

One man is as good as another. I shall probably marry [*looking intently at DEYNCOURT*] Mr. Mixer.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

That beastly little American? [*Aside.*] Not if I can help it.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Why not? Mr. Mixer may not be good form, it is true, but he is exceedingly amiable and very rich.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Helen, surely you will not throw yourself away a second time.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

If I choose. Who will prevent me?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

You? Take care, Richard Deyncourt. Don't lay yourself open to misconstruction. A man who flirts is despicable.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Good Lord, Helen, what are you driving at?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

How would she like to have you interfering in my affairs?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

She? Who?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

The woman you love.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Love? I? Good Heavens, what do you mean?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Oh, Dick, you are sly, but I have found you out.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Aside.*] She's found out more than I know myself.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Now go back to your lodgings, write to your bachelor friends, and get leave to approach the—lady.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

By Jove, they have betrayed me.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

No one has betrayed you. I have simply put two and two together. Women often do.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

But they don't always come to logical conclusions.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

I have in this case. And now [*going*] you will excuse me?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Alarmed.*] You are going?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

I have an engagement.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I beg of you.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Don't beg of me, for I should refuse you.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Detaining her.*] You must listen to me. You are laboring under a mistake.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

I shall be disengaged later.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Or engaged irrevocably.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Possibly. Captain Chatfield and Mr. Mixter are waiting at the house.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

The devil! And you have known it all along?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Of course. Good-bye.

LORD DEYN COURT.

If you leave me now, Helen, like this, I swear I never will return.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Oh, yes, you will. Au revoir.

[*Exit LADY CASTLEDOWN to house laughing.*]

LORD DEYN COURT

[*Sinks down on seat, L.*] Now, what does she mean? How does she know that I will return? [*Meditating.*] I am in love, am I? By Jove, old Stiles is right; I don't understand the women. [*Rises, walks about.*] So there was another man. Wonder who he could have been? Helen and I were great friends at the time she married, lived near each other, hunted together, in fact, were quite intimate. Queer I didn't know the fellow. He must have been a devilish fool to have let her marry old Castledown. Now there's Mixer. Somebody ought to prevent that. Don't see what the devil I can do. [*Enter GERALD, R.*]

GERALD HARTLEY.

[*Slapping DEYN COURT on the back.*] Hullo, old man.

LORD DEYN COURT

Oh, it's you, Gerald? Glad to see you. When did you get back?

GERALD HARTLEY.

Now, this moment. I came directly through.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Oh, were you in such a hurry to see Helen?

GERALD HARTLEY.

Helen? Isn't Marjory here?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Oh, I dare say.

GERALD HARTLEY.

What is the matter with you, man, you're not looking well.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

No-o? I believe I am a little knocked out. Going to the continent to recruit.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Oh, I see. By way of the Towers?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

You are looking well, at all events.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Well, yes, I feel pretty fit. I suppose, Dick, you know that this is the twenty-first?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

The twenty-first?

GERALD HARTLEY.

Surely you haven't forgotten the date. Our year of probation is up, and nothing lies between Marjory and me.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

You are very accurate in your dates.

GERALD HARTLEY.

I am in love.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Look here, Hartley, I am afraid there may be a disappointment in store for you.

GERALD HARTLEY..

[*Alarmed.*] What do you mean?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Well, I studied Marjory at the time you left her last year, and I don't—sorry to hurt your feelings, old man—but I don't really think that she cared.

GERALD HARTLEY.

I say, Dick, don't knock a man out like that before he's had his first innings. Now, Helen has led me to hope.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Helen?

GERALD HARTLEY.

[*Looking at watch.*] Yes. She wired me to be in the shrubbery here at four-thirty. It is quite that now, so please get out, old fellow.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Nice way to treat your best friend, by Jove! I'll get out fast enough if the women are expected.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Oh, come, Dick, don't get waxy. You see when a man's in love —

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Oh, yes, when a man's in love. Good-bye.

[*Exit.*]

GERALD HARTLEY.

What has come to old Dick? [*Slipping behind bush.*] I'll wait for Marjory here.

[*Enter MARJORY, L.*]

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

More roses. Helen is insatiable to-day.

[*Cuts flowers ; starts when GERALD appears, but pretends not to be surprised and goes on cutting roses.*]

GERALD HARTLEY.

[*Appearing.*] Miss Heathcote—Marjory.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

I beg pardon.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Miss Heathcote, surely you haven't forgotten me?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Mr. Hartley? Oh, how do you do? Are you staying in the neighborhood?

GERALD HARTLEY.

[*Aside.*] Confound it. [*To MARJORY.*] Hardly. I was in San Francisco three weeks ago.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Indeed? Did you like California?

GERALD HARTLEY.

Like it? It was only a shade worse than Japan, or India, or ——

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

China? I remember you were going to look for something in that heathen country.

GERALD HARTLEY.

[*Trying to take her hand.*] Marjory, will you let me explain? I have come back ——

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Putting hands behind her.*] To arrange about the property?

GERALD HARTLEY.

Damn the property.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Laughing.*] You express my sentiments exactly.
[*Gets behind bench.*]

GERALD HARTLEY.

[*Going after her.*] Miss Heathcote, will you listen to me?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Coming round in front.*] Lady Helen is waiting for these roses. [*Starts up c.; GERALD follows her.*]

GERALD HARTLEY.

[*Catching her.*] Stop; I will be heard.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

What have you got to say?

[*Looking at him and laughing.*]

GERALD HARTLEY.

[*Kissing her.*] Nothing.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*Looking down.*] Why didn't you do that last year?

GERALD HARTLEY.

Because I was a fool.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

So Helen said.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Helen said I was a fool?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Yes, to join Cousin Richard's ridiculous society.

GERALD HARTLEY.

How did you know about that?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Oh, we guessed. Men are so transparent.

GERALD HARTLEY.

What a wise little woman you have become. Then there is nothing for me to say?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

No, nothing more about bachelors.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Bachelors be hanged!

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Oh, no. What should we do for husbands?

GERALD HARTLEY.

Will you take this one for better or worse?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

If he asks me ?

GERALD HARTLEY.

But you said once ——

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Never mind what I said—once. I say now that you will get the estate after all.

GERALD HARTLEY.

Bother the estate. [*Kissing her.*]

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Don't, Gerald, some one is coming.

GERALD HARTLEY.

By Jove it's Jane, and she's got Tommy Chatfield in tow. Where shall we go ?

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

In here.

[*Exeunt into shrubbery up c. Sit on bench at back out of sight. Enter LADY JANE and CHATFIELD, L.*]

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Now, Captain Chatfield, explain yourself.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Explain myself? I couldn't, you know.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Look here, Tommy, I have always been your friend. Make a clean breast of it now, and I'll stand by you.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I don't know what you mean.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Yes, you do. First, tell me why you went to Egypt so suddenly last year?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Her Majesty's orders.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

But your regiment stayed here. You got exchanged.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Sometimes a fellow longs for active service.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Some fellows. Not your sort.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Well, I got more than I bargained for.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Was that why you came back?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Oh, I say, Jane, I never was much at the Catechism.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

So much the worse for you. Will you tell me why you left Egypt?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Climate didn't agree with me. Sick leave.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

You were a long time getting to England ?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Ye-es. I came by way of Monte Carlo.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

How much do you owe ?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Hang it, Jane, you do come to the point, don't you ?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Are you going to tell me ?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I wouldn't dare. It's a beastly sum.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

I thought so.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Why should you think about it at all ?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

That is what I am about to tell you.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

All right, drive on.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

You may be surprised.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I'm past that. Nothing will surprise me again.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Oh, come, pull yourself together, Tommy. There's hope yet.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Not for me.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Are you so hard hit?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

In the pocket, yes.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

I intend to pay your debts.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

The devil you do.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Why not? I have more money than I know what to do with.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

That may be, but, hang it, a gentleman can't accept money from a lady.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

A woman may loan money to a man. The question of sex doesn't enter into business relations.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

But I can't give you any security.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

I'll take you.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Oh, Lord !

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

I told you I should surprise you.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

You've succeeded. It's so deuced sudden.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Don't answer yet. Take time to consider.

[*Walks away, and sits L.*]

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*Aside.*] By Jove ! this is a facer. [*Walks up and down stage.*] Hits a man right between the eyes. What's the good of protective societies for the men, if the women take to proposing ? Well, she's got the shekels and 'twill please the governor. He'd cut up rusty about those debts. [*Pause.*] There's absolutely nothing else for me to do. So here goes. I say, Jane.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

[*Rising and coming back.*] Well ?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I'm afraid it's a deuced poor investment for you.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

I'll take the risk.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

I wonder why ?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

That's my secret. Will you accept ?

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

The money?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Yes.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

If you will accept me.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

That is settled then.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

[*Aside.*] Jove! she takes it cool. [*To JANE.*] I'm no end obliged, Jane, and seriously, I've no doubt you and I will pull uncommonly well in harness.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

If we don't, it won't be my fault.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

It's deuced good of you to take me in hand. I—I appreciate it. [*Taking her hand.*] I suppose I may—kiss you?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

[*Withdrawing hand.*] Certainly not.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Customary thing.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

When I wish to be kissed, I will tell you.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Well, I'll be hanged.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Now come and find Helen Castledown.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

If it's just the same to you, we will not drag Helen Castledown into our affairs.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Very well.

[*Exeunt into shrubbery, R. Enter MIXTER hurriedly, followed by MRS. HARTLEY from L.*]

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*To himself; extreme R.*] The quicker I get back to America the better.

MRS. HARTLEY.

[*Extreme L.; to herself.*] Dear, dear me, why did Helen say in that dreadfully impressive manner, don't let the enemy escape? How can I keep hold of this extremely volatile man? He looks as if he might bolt at any moment.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Glancing back.*] Wonder what she's after. Must get out of her way. One woman is all I care to tackle on a day like this.

MRS. HARTLEY.

[*Sitting on bench, L., fanning herself.*] Mr. Mixter, don't you find England oppressive after America?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Very.

MRS. HARTLEY.

If you would sit down, you wouldn't feel the heat so much.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Sitting down won't help my case. It isn't the climate that affects me.

MRS. HARTLEY.

O, excuse me, I —

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Coming over.*] Look here, Mrs. Hartley, when a man has traveled three thousand miles on a matter of business, and finds that his time has been thrown away, he naturally would feel—the heat.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Perhaps it would cool you off to talk the matter over with a sympathetic friend.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Quite so; I agree with you. But I have no sympathetic friend in England.

MRS. HARTLEY.

[*Aside.*] He seems more natural now. [*To MIXTER.*] How can you say that when I am here.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Sitting down.*] Really, Mrs. Hartley, it's very kind of you to take an interest in me.

MRS. HARTLEY.

[*Aside.*] Oh, Helen. [*To MIXTER.*] Not at all.

Americans always attract me, and you seem a most interesting type.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Aside.*] Type! I like that. [*To* MRS. HARTLEY.] Ever been in America?

MRS. HARTLEY.

No.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Like to go over?

MRS. HARTLEY.

Well, I don't know, it would be a great undertaking.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Afraid of being seasick?

MRS. HARTLEY.

Oh, no, I rather like boats.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Aside.*] That scores one in her favor.

MRS. HARTLEY.

I once went out on the Thames in a house-boat, and I found the motion very pleasant.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Aside.*] Great Scott! [*To* MRS. HARTLEY.] You must be quite a sailor.

MRS. HARTLEY.

I felt so at the time.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Should be most happy to give you a real sail in my yacht. Got a new boat this year.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Indeed? Was the old one unsafe?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Laughing.*] Well, now that's funny. You see, Mrs. Hartley, while I was waiting for—in fact—for the opportunity to attend to that matter of business, I spent the time in building a cup-defender.

MRS. HARTLEY.

A what?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Cup-defender. Boat, you know, racer.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Oh, a boat? Did you get it done?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Oh, yes, and she's a clipper. Came over in her. Would you like to board her?

MRS. HARTLEY.

To what?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

To come aboard and try her.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Oh, certainly. But, Mr. Mixter, you haven't told me what worried you.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Quite so. Well, I feel better now.

MRS. HARTLEY.

I thought you would, if you sat down.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

You see, Mrs. Hartley, I've been thinking of marrying for some time.

MRS. HARTLEY.

[*Uneasily.*] Yes?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

I've looked for a craft all style and rigging heretofore.

MRS. HARTLEY.

[*Aside.*] How very peculiar he is.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

But now I've got on another tack. If I could find a good plain-rigged sloop, with a centre board, to keep her steady, I'd try to secure her at once.

MRS. HARTLEY.

I'm afraid I don't understand nautical terms.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

You'd soon learn.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Have you found what you want?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Well, I've got my eye on something.

MRS. HARTLEY.

[*Aside.*] O dear, where can Helen be? I can't keep this enemy in check much longer. [*To MIXTER.*] I hope it—she will suit.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

I think she will do.

[*Enter DEYNCOURT, R.*]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Beg pardon.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Rising and walking towards DEYNCOURT.*] You're just the man I want, Lord Deyncourt. I feel like suing you for damages.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Me? What have I done?

[*MRS. HARTLEY fans herself and looks bored during this scene.*]

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Well, time is money over in America, and you've done me out of one year of my life.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I don't see how.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

By inveigling me into signing that confounded contract.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Oh, then she has rejected you?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Oh, yes, she rejected me fast enough.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

But you weren't obliged to ask her; you needn't have come back.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

What, after I told her I should? We may not be polished as some, but a respectable American keeps his word. Not that she deserved it —

LORD DEYNCOURT.

What do you mean by that?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Well, she did encourage me last year, you see. However, I was fairly warned. I knew that she was a flirt, and —

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Stop that, Mixter.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

What's up? I took your word for it, you know.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Last year is not this year, and who ever slanders Helen Castledown will have to settle with me.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Aside.*] Another scalp for her belt. [*To DEYNCOURT.*] Sorry for you, Lord Deyncourt, if you're hit in that quarter, because it's no go.

LORD DEYN COURT.

I am not in need of advice.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

No? Well, I was only going to say that there's no chance for any of us, because there's another fellow.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Did she admit that to you?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

Oh, yes, old attachment, and all that. Hopeless, you know.

LORD DEYN COURT.

Any idea who the fellow is?

WILLIAM MIXTER.

No, but it isn't Chatfield. She made short work of him. [MRS. HARTLEY *rises and walks away, L., indignantly.*] Oh, I say, Mrs. Hartley, don't go.

LORD DEYN COURT.

I beg your pardon, Mrs. Hartley. [*Offers hand.*]

MRS. HARTLEY.

Well, Richard, have you concluded to speak to me at last?

LORD DEYN COURT.

I was preoccupied.

MRS. HARTLEY.

Oh, you are very excusable. I will find Helen; she seems to be the only person who is quite rational and self-possessed to-day.

[*Walking off meets GERALD and MARJORY.*]

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Mrs. Hartley.

GERALD HARTLEY.

My dear aunt —

[*Kisses her.*]

MRS. HARTLEY.

Gerald? Well, this is a surprise.

WILLIAM MIXTER.

[*Aside.*] It's evidently been plain sailing for him.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Well, old fellow!

GERALD HARTLEY.

I say, Dick, it's all right. She did care.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Glad for you, old chap. [*Shakes hands; to MARJORY.*] You are a nice little ward, Marjory [*kisses her*], but I am quite ready to make you over to Hartley.

[*Puts his arm about her, and then passes her over to GERALD. Enter LADY JANE and CHATFIELD from shrubbery, R., back.*]

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

Hullo, Deyncourt. You've turned up just in time. If there are any blessings to spare, bestow a few upon us.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

You and Jane?

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Are you surprised, Richard?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

No, oh, no, I'm past that.

LADY JANE AYLWARD.

Then say something.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I'm not much at making speeches, Jane.

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

You might give your consent.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Oh, you've got that fast enough. Not that it would matter to you, Jane. And you might do worse. Tommy is a good-natured chap, as men go and [*to CHATFIELD*] Jane's easy enough to live with, when you get used to her.

[*Enter LADY CASTLEDOWN from L. DEYNCOURT R. C., GERALD and MARJORY R., CHATFIELD and LADY JANE L., MRS. HARTLEY and MIXTER extreme L.*]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

How serious you all look. Has anything happened?

MRS. HARTLEY.

Oh, no, Helen, we are trying to keep cool.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

You will find it much more comfortable in the

drawing-room, and tea is waiting. Mrs. Hartley, will you take Mr. Mixter inside?

[*Exeunt* MRS. HARTLEY and MIXTER, L.]

CAPT. THOMAS CHATFIELD.

It *is* deuced warm here.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Let Jane give you some tea, Captain Chatfield. You will find it quite refreshing.

[LADY JANE *crosses to* L., CHATFIELD *stands*, LADY JANE *passes, beckons, snaps fingers at him*; he *follows slowly*; *exeunt*, L.]

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

Shall I take Gerald in?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Yes, dear.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*To* GERALD.] Will you come?

GERALD HARTLEY.

To the end of the earth with you.

MARJORY HEATHCOTE.

[*To* LADY CASTLEDOWN.] Haven't we proved good allies?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Very. [*Exeunt* GERALD and MARJORY, L., GERALD'S *arm about her waist*; DEYNCOURT R., and LADY CASTLEDOWN L.] Well?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Are you satisfied?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Not quite.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

What more do you want?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

That you should acknowledge your defeat.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

There is no need. We are beaten all along the line. This is my Waterloo.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Then surrender.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

To you?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Yes.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I did that long ago. I came back to tell you.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

At last?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I believe now, Helen, that I have loved you all my life.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

And it has taken me one whole year to make you say so.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

You? Then you have tried?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Most persistently.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Is there hope then?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Not the slightest.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Why have you taken so much trouble?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

To avenge the wrongs you have heaped upon our sex.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

I was only defending my own.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

And to laugh at you.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Then you are heartless.

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

I am heartless.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

And you will never change. It is no use to come back—next year?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

No.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Because of that other fellow ——

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Because of—him.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Then this is the end?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

Yes. Good-bye. [*Holds out her hand to him.*]

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Taking her hand.*] Good-bye, my dear.

[*About to kiss her hand then drops it and walks off slowly, R.*]

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

[*Watches him, starts, waits until he is disappearing then.*] Richard! [DEYNCOURT *pauses.*] Dick!
[DEYNCOURT *turns.*] Have you never suspected?

LORD DEYNCOURT.

[*Returning.*] What?

LADY HELEN CASTLEDOWN.

That you—were the—other fellow.

LORD DEYNCOURT.

Helen! [*Opens his arms ; embrace.*]

[*Orchestra plays strain of wedding march.*]

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